

11/30/2009 This Week in Congress

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November 30, 2009

Dear Friend,

Welcome to "This Week in Congress."

Celebrating Thanksgiving with Soldiers at Fort Riley

Among the many things our country has to be thankful for are the men and women of the military and the sacrifices they make to defend our freedoms. On Thanksgiving Day, my family and I shared a traditional turkey meal with soldiers stationed at Fort Riley. Around 700 soldiers, many of whom were unable to be home with their families, gathered together to give thanks. The dinner was hosted by Major General Vincent Brooks, commanding general of the 1st Infantry Division and Fort Riley, and his wife, Carol. We were also joined by Clay Center Mayor Sharon Brown. I thanked the troops for their service, courage and dedication. Thanks to the folks at Fort Riley for allowing my family and I to share Thanksgiving with them. [Click here to view a photo.](#)

Supporting Gun Rights in Upcoming Supreme Court Case

I support the Second Amendment right of citizens to keep and bear arms. To protect this right, I recently joined other Members of Congress in signing an amicus curiae, or "friend of the court," brief supporting gun rights in an important Second Amendment case the Supreme Court is expected to consider early next year.

In an historic decision in 2008, the Supreme Court affirmed an individual's Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms. That decision overturned Washington, D.C.'s strict gun ban. However, cities such as Chicago continue to impose restrictive gun laws, including bans on handguns.

The brief I signed asks the Supreme Court to apply Second Amendment rights to state and local governments so that all law-abiding Americans, not just those living in our nation's capital, will be protected from government intrusion. I am hopeful the case of *McDonald v. City of Chicago* will uphold the fundamental freedom of American citizens to bear arms. A decision is expected next summer.

Speaking at the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts' Annual Convention

On Tuesday, I addressed members and guests of the Kansas Association of Conservation Districts (KACD) at their 65th annual convention in Wichita. KACD is a voluntary and nongovernmental organization, whose members are the conservation districts located in the state's 105 counties. I spoke to the group about the status of federal conservation programs, including the Conservation Reserve Program and the Environmental Quality Incentives Program. Both programs are highly utilized by Kansas farmers and ranchers and help protect our environment. I also provided a general update on current issues being considered in Congress. Thanks to KACD Executive Director Pat Lehman for inviting me to speak.

Attending the 2-1A State Championship Football Game

On Saturday, I participated in the pre-game coin flip and trophy presentation at the 2-1A Kansas State Football Championship Game at Lewis Field on the campus of Fort Hays State University (FHSU) in Hays. The championship game paired the Smith Center Redmen against the Centralia Panthers. Centralia beat Smith Center 20-12. Both teams had great seasons and should be proud of their accomplishments.

Before the game began, I joined FHSU Athletic Director Curtis Hammeke and others at a luncheon, where I congratulated both programs and their communities for the success the teams enjoyed this season. Thanks to Rick Bowden and Reg Romine of the Kansas State High School Activities Association and Curtis Hammeke for arranging my participation.

Visiting Harper Hospital District #5

Hospitals across Kansas are working to meet the health care needs of their patients. To better serve the people of Harper County, a \$3.5 million expansion of Harper Hospital District #5 is nearing completion. The project includes a

12,000 square foot medical clinic with 15 exam rooms, a new hospital lab, procedure room, business office and front entry. I visited the hospital on Monday to learn more about the new facility and how it will serve area residents. Thank you to CEO and Administrator Kim Cinelli for the invitation. [Click here to view a photo from my visit.](#)

Kicking Off Christmas Season in Russell

To mark the beginning of the Christmas season, I joined residents of Russell in participating in the community's annual Christmas Parade. The theme of this year's parade was "Recycle the Holiday Memories." The evening parade featured lighted floats and classic cars. Russell resident and Purple Heart recipient, Dr. Glennard French served as the Grand Marshal. Post Rock Family Services Russell Family of the Year, Bill and Amy Dollison and their children, Bailey and Cody, were also part of the festivities. Thank you to Elmer Svaty of Lucas for driving me in the parade.

Kansas Food Banks Need Donations

This week, I encouraged those who are able to make a donation to a food bank or food pantry in their community. Food banks in our state have reported to me great increases in demand, with some reporting an increased need of 30 to 40 percent. As more people are without jobs, food banks continue to see more people seeking assistance. [Click here to listen to my comments.](#) [Click here to locate a food bank to contribute to.](#)

From Washington to Home: Big First Listening Tour Continues

I continued my 13th annual listening tour this week with stops in Comanche and Barber Counties. During these town hall meetings, I listened to the concerns of area residents and spoke to them about health care, Cap and Trade and the troublesome increase in government spending. These conversations give me direction in Washington, D.C. Today, I am in Scott and Lane Counties. On Saturday, I will be in Haskell County.

Saturday, December 5

Haskell County Tour Stop, Sublette

Time: 3:30 to 4:30 PM

Location: Southwest Plains Regional Service Center

Room: West Conference Room

Address: 900 West Lark Avenue

Residents are invited to attend the town hall meetings to share their thoughts with me on current issues. [Click here to view the listening tour schedule](#) and to see where I have already stopped this year. [Click here to view photos from this week's tour stops](#).

In the Office

Nadine and Jessica Buell of Cedar Point came by for a tour of the United States Capital.

Contact Me

It is an honor to serve you in Washington, D.C. Please let me know how I can be of assistance. To send me an email, [click here](#). You can also [click here](#) to contact me through one of my Kansas offices or my Washington, D.C., office.

Very truly yours,

Jerry